

Reaching for Right Relationships: CPJ at 50

By Joe Gunn



“Happy birthday, CPJ: You made it through 50 years!” stated a CPJ founder, John Olthuis.

Speaking in Edmonton on May 30, Olthuis, Board member Lorraine Land, and local musicians Justine Vandergrift and “Tony Fiddle” engaged a crowd of 120 CPJ supporters. Olthuis started with trivia from 1963, when CPJ’s forerunner, the Christian Action Foundation, was established: who were the prime minister(s) that year? Who was premier of Alberta? He even questioned if we remembered the Beatles!

He then shared the three fundamental assumptions that were at work in the dominant ideology of the day: there were no limits to economic growth, there would be trickle-down economic benefits for all, and as growth proceeded, the ecological damages could be minimized.

CPJ’s response to was to focus on “crystallization points” where change seemed most possible. The prime example in Olthuis’s time at CPJ was the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline of the early 1970s, which proposed sending fossil fuel from the Beaufort Sea to U.S. markets. At the time the U.S. had six per cent of the world’s population, but used 40 per cent of the planet’s oil. The largest energy companies in the world, the famed “Seven Sisters,” were pushing a project where the benefits would go south, not to the Native Dene people.



So CPJ, and Canada’s Christian churches, got active. The book *Moratorium* (co-authored by Olthuis, Hugh McCullum, and Karmel McCullum of the ecumenical Project North) called for a 10-year moratorium. Tommy Douglas called the CPJ office one day, offering to buy 1,000 copies to distribute on Parliament Hill and beyond. Olthuis challenged the National Energy Board’s head, Marshall Crowe, of having a reasonable apprehension of bias due to his oil company links – and won the case at the Supreme Court. The 1974–1977 Berger Commission engaged the public in hearings from the Northwest Territories to Charlottetown. When the Trudeau government declared a moratorium, it marked one of CPJ’s most significant impacts.



There were, of course, other victories. In the 1980s CPJ staffer Kathy Vandergrift was declared Edmonton’s “Citizen of the Year” for proposing what became the city’s blue box program. And Olthuis hailed CPJ’s current “impressive” work on poverty.

What’s changed? Lorraine Land says there’s now a crisis of democracy in Canada. As examples: budget bills are used to pass dozens of non-budget matters; scientific and statistical data is now scorned; officials are required to take loyalty oaths; and dissent is curtailed by politically motivated funding cuts and control by the Prime Minister’s Office.



Introduced by CPJ’s Joe Gunn, Olthuis also spoke in Calgary on June 3, and local environmentalist Mishka Lysack offered a response to a group of over 40 people. Quoting a Sufi poet as guidance for CPJ members to stay involved to make change, Othuis advised, “Let’s get loose with compassion and drown in the delicious ambiance of love...”

We look forward to further anniversary events filled with energy, passion, and insight throughout the year in Toronto, Winnipeg, and Ottawa. Learn more at www.cpj.ca/50years.



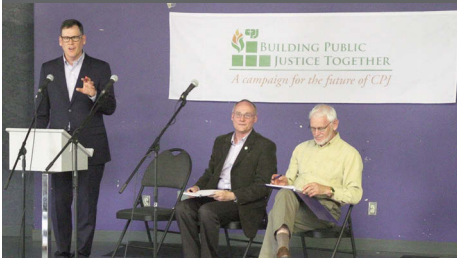
Proud to Protect Refugees continues

CPJ's work on refugee justice continues with participation in the Proud to Protect Refugees campaign led by the Canadian Council for Refugees. We've sent two letters to Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney expressing particular concern about withdrawal of health services to some groups of refugees, and used a wide range of media to promote and participate in national events for Refugee Rights Day in April and World Refugee Day in June. Find in-depth analysis and ongoing ways to get involved at www.cpj.ca.

Video contest winners

Congratulations to the creative and passionate winners of our high school video contest! "Hope," "Imagine," and "Abolishing Prostitution in Canada" are all live at CPJ's YouTube site. Thanks to all who entered videos, promoted the contest, and cast a vote! See the videos, as well as our CPJ video, at www.youtube.com/c4pj.

2013 Annual General Meeting



Our AGM was held on May 30 in Edmonton, Alberta, on the campus of The King's University College, just before the 50th anniversary celebration (see page 1). Over 50 people came from Edmonton and well beyond. The meeting featured presentations from Chair Mark Huyser-Wierenga of Edmonton, Treasurer Frederick Wind of Whitby, and Executive Director Joe Gunn. The membership elected four new members to the board: Genevieve Gallant of Ottawa, Mike Bos of Ottawa, Leah Watkiss of Toronto, and Naomi Kabugi of Ottawa. Will Postma, John Murphy, and Dwayne Hodgson were re-elected for a second term. We appreciate the service given by Dan Monafu, Ericka Stephens-Rennie, and Frederick Wind, who are retiring, with particular gratitude to Frederick who was our dedicated treasurer.

CPJ on the Hill

The House Finance Committee's three hearings on income inequality were held in April. CPJ released our own in-depth report, "Income, Wealth, and Inequality," the day before the hearings began, we sent a submission to the committee, and Brad Wassink attended all three sessions. In addition, Brad and Simon Lewchuk had an article in *The Hill Times* asking tough questions about the values behind the hearings. Brad and Simon attended two All-Party Anti-Poverty Caucus meetings this spring: one in May focused on food security, and one in June focused on the social determinants of health.

New Poverty Trends Scorecard Reports

"Income, Wealth, and Inequality," the second report in our *Poverty Trends Scorecard* series, was released in February and well received. Soon available at www.cpj.ca: the third section, "Labour Market Inclusion," which looks at how employment trends have been impacting different groups of Canadians.

Welcome, Benjamin!



Simon and Ashley Lewchuk are very happy to announce the birth of their third child, Benjamin Robb. He was born early on May 9, weighed 6 lb. 13 oz., and is a younger brother to Sophie (3 ½) and Sam (18 months). Ashley and Simon are having fun and keeping busy. Sophie loves helping out, Sam's too busy playing and pulling things off the shelf to give his opinion, and Maddy, their dog, is depressed.

Citizens for Public Justice

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Citizens for Public Justice's mission is to promote public justice in Canada by shaping key public policy debates through research and analysis, publishing, and public dialogue. CPJ encourages citizens, leaders in society, and governments to support policies and practices which reflect God's call for love, justice, and stewardship.

CPJ annual membership fee includes *the Catalyst*:
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Somewhere in Between

By Karri Munn-Venn

Secularism. Pluralism. Relativism. Values.

These are just some of the concepts explored by the 150 Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Baha'is, practitioners of Native Spirituality, Agnostics, and Atheists gathered at a recent event on faith in the public square.



Louise Profeit-Leblanc leading a workshop on the Truth and Reconciliation process

Born of a belief in the value of participation by Canada's religions in civil society, *Bridging the Secular Divide: Religion and Canadian Public Discourse* took place over two bright spring days in late May on the campus of McGill University in Montreal. Convened by an interfaith group – including CPJ – from across the religious and political spectrum, the national conference addressed key questions on religion and politics: How should religious perspectives inform the national conversation? How can religious voices contribute to the common good of all Canadians? Where does responsibility rest for changing the current state of affairs?

While debate was limited to polite exchanges between presenters and participants, there was a clear consensus on the need to set aside a more restrictive definition of secularization that leaves no place for religion in the public sphere, and instead have one that is more open. Secular society – particularly in Canada – is understood to be multi-religious. Together with our modern democracy, secularism offers a secure

place where people of many different religions feel, at the very least, safe in practicing their religion, and increasingly supported and accommodated.

The Canadian body politic is built on a Christian framework. While the distance between overt religiosity and the political process's current way of being has continued to expand, that a Christian foundation exists is undeniable.

This has implications for people of faith in Canada:

- Not all religions occupy the same space in Canadian society. Christianity dominates and those practicing “minority religions” are also often part of a racial or other minority. As a result, they may not see themselves reflected in the dominant societal structures.
- One's cultural and linguistic background can play a significant role in perceptions of many things, including the role of religious institutions in public policy discussions. The experience of living in an oppressive theocratic state, for example, can prompt a strong desire to exclude religion from the halls of government.
- Misconceptions about cultural and religious dress can weigh heavily on interpersonal, inter-institutional, and interfaith dialogue. An effort is required on the part of all people to engage openly with others – taking down barriers, rather than putting them up.
- Combined, these issues can result in individual or collective insecurity about engaging in matters of public policy, or – more specifically – challenging political leaders, the decisions they take, and the policies they promote.

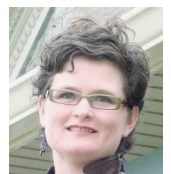
In their keynote conversation, the Honourable Bill Blaikie (former MP and United Church minister) and Dr. Daniel Weinstock (professor of law and ethics) observed that secular perspectives are grounded in religious concepts, such as rights and values. Part of the difficulty, and the richness of the debate, is in the contiguousness of religious and secular

perspectives. Cognizant of these challenges and opportunities, we need to build an architecture of democracy that recognizes the realities of majorities and minorities.

Back to the question of what it means to live, worship, and engage in a secular space, we were cautioned against conflating pluralism and relativism. While we, as people of faith, share certain beliefs, we are not all the same. The diversity of our perspectives needs to be both acknowledged and accepted.

So what does all of this mean for the work of CPJ? As an explicitly Christian organization, working on issues of public policy, we occupy an in-between space. Driven by our faith and a call to seek justice, we sometimes work in a church context, yet often operate in non-religious environments. The lesson of *Bridging the Secular Divide*, then, is a reminder for us to continue to do what we do well: to work respectfully, in support of the common good, always mindful of the dignity of all and the integrity of all creation.

In addition to the plenary events, *Bridging the Secular Divide* included six breakout sessions addressing poverty, the environment, truth and reconciliation, youth engagement, public education, and secularism in Quebec. CPJ's Joe Gunn was joined by Rebekah Hart, a facilitator with the *Work that Reconnects*, in an engaging conversation with over 20 participants on how our religious practices can move us to action on climate change. By listening to and engaging with the earth, Joe and Rebekah said, we can move towards an integral, prophetic response to the climate crisis.



Karri Munn-Venn is a Policy Analyst at CPJ.

Exposing the Myths: Canadians for Tax Fairness

By Gail Dugas

Money may not buy happiness but properly spent, it creates good health care, innovative education, strong public services, and a better shot at accessibility and equality for Canadians.

That's at least part of the motivation for a fledgling organization called Canadians for Tax Fairness. Just over a year old, it has set its sights squarely on changing how Canadians talk about taxes. One of its primary objectives has been to expose some myths.

"Many governments, including Canada's, have pushed the so-called "austerity fix" as an absolute necessity," says Tax Fairness Executive Director Dennis Howlett. "The reality is that because of tax havens and tax loopholes, federal and provincial governments lose untold billions of dollars in revenues annually. Let's get that money and then see where we stand. Most of us pay our taxes. It is the responsibility for the privilege of living in a country like Canada. Unfortunately, more ultra-wealthy Canadians and multinationals are spending a lot of effort to avoid paying their fair share."

Using Statistics Canada data, Tax Fairness discovered that \$170 billion is parked in havens. The amount has been growing steadily each year.

Tax havens are a global problem. They literally divert potential government revenues away from countries in every hemisphere by creating spaces that have no or low taxation, a lack of transparency, and minimal sharing of information with other countries. Last year a study by the Tax Justice Network, which includes Tax Fairness, estimated that the world's wealthiest have stashed between \$18 and \$31 trillion in havens.

The message is slowly getting through to governments faced with revenue challenges. In June, British Prime Minister David Cameron hosted a meeting of G8 countries in Northern

Ireland that placed tax avoidance as a top agenda item. That meeting of the world's most powerful countries has potential to stop the practice of multinationals not paying taxes anywhere.



Tax Fairness has been working to make sure Canada doesn't drop the ball on this file at meetings like this with its international counterparts.

The organization has appeared before the Finance Committee studying the topic; supported the Parliamentary Budget Office's attempts to develop a "tax-gap" methodology to calculate how much of what Canada is owed is missing; lobbied politicians; and reached out to ordinary Canadians.

"This is not a partisan issue," says Howlett. "It is a matter of good financial stewardship – who can honestly argue with that?"

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty certainly didn't argue in the 2013 federal budget. That document highlighted tax fairness, closed a few loopholes, introduced a "snitch line" for reports of big-ticket evasion and started the ball rolling on a special Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) SWAT team to tackle global tax cheats.

Tax Fairness supporters took some satisfaction in the attention Flaherty

brought to the issue. Howlett remains worried that Canada is "more bark than bite."

While it is good news that the government has established the special unit to focus on tax haven – related tax evasion, he says it comes nowhere near being able to tackle the problem.

"The CRA has actually suffered more job cuts than any other department – nearly 3,000 jobs lost," he says. "It is a false economy to be cutting back on CRA capacity. It means more in lost revenue than savings from job cuts."

Howlett runs the organization on a shoe-string with the help of two part-timers and a roll-up your sleeves Board of Directors which includes CPJ's Joe Gunn. The Tax Fairness office is tucked away in the corner of the CPJ's operation, but Howlett is often on the road. As a newly appointed director of the Global

Alliance for Tax Justice he has been playing a key role in pushing for worldwide attention to tax issues. And as one of the authors of Tax Fairness's book, *The Great Revenue Robbery* (see book review on page 5), he has been from Halifax to Victoria. Every chance he gets he takes the opportunity to talk Tax Fairness with journalists, politicians, academics, talk show hosts, church and community groups, and students.

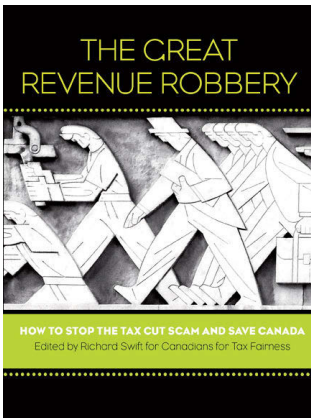
And this is the kind of grassroots support that's needed to make change in an issue that's impacting us all. Find out how you can be a part of it by visiting the Tax Fairness website at www.taxfairness.ca.



Gail Dugas coordinates communications for Canadians for Tax Fairness.

Book Reviews

Summer book suggestions from Citizens for Public Justice



**The Great Revenue Robbery:
How to Stop the Tax Cut
Scam and Save Canada**
Edited by Richard Swift for
Canadians for Tax Fairness
Between the Lines, 2013

Reviewed by David Langille

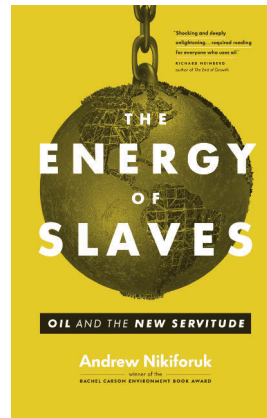
Although taxes may at first seem like a dry issue, *The Great Revenue Robbery* reads like a manifesto for rebuilding the caring, compassionate country that made us proud to be Canadian.

I was touched to read Trish Hennessy's account of her family's struggles to survive in rural Saskatchewan during the Dirty Thirties, as they came to see taxes as a gift we give each other. Alberta-based economist Diana Gibson then recounts how the tide turned against social programs in the 1980s. She boldly calls for tax increases, expanded social programs, and stronger labour rights.

Canadians for Tax Fairness (C4TF) Executive Director Dennis Howlett echoes that the time is ripe for change. Profits are up but so is inequality, while investment and job creation stagnate. Peter Gillespie tells a gripping story about offshore tax havens that enable individuals and corporations to escape tax laws. Toby Sanger reports on the battle for financial transaction taxes that would curb excessive financial speculation and generate precious funds for development.

CPJ Executive Director Joe Gunn tackles a tougher challenge. Taxing carbon in an effort to save the world from climate change means taking on oil barons, bankers, and government leaders. He proposes "green taxes" that are both smart and fair. If you haven't yet heard these messages, journalist Richard Swift explains why: journalism is a business and the publishers are businessmen.

How then do we proceed? Murray Dobbin, the founding president of C4TF, believes progressive values have not been abandoned, pointing to the Occupy and Quebec student movements. For the wider public to think differently about taxes and government we need a vision of expanded social programs, economic security, and environment health. Then public support for fair taxes will be inevitable.



**The Energy of Slaves:
Oil and the New Servitude**
By Andrew Nikiforuk
Greystone Books, 2012

Reviewed by John Hiemstra

If you read only one book this summer, make it *The Energy of Slaves*. Is this too strong? Perhaps, but this topic demands it.

Award-winning author Andrew Nikiforuk offers a prophetic warning about society's global addiction to fossil fuels and the ensuing distortion of our civilization's structure and functioning, damage to the integrity of creation, and threat of climate change devastation.

In this journalistic guide, Nikiforuk's central argument is that our society, historically powered by muscle (human and animal) and solar (food) power, is now driven by fossil fuels such as coal, oil, gas, and oilsands deposits. If we convert energy used daily into the equivalent produced by one human slave, each of us depends on thousands of "energy slaves"!

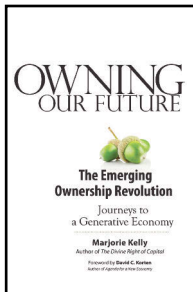
This counter-intuitive message demands support. He delivers compelling evidence that fossil fuels distort development, producing energy-guzzling and polluting "industrialized agriculture," urban sprawl, and globalized production and trade systems.

We are now literally "slaves" to fossil fuels. Current "servitude to a petroleum order" does not produce happy, thriving communities, but more complex, materialistic, and narcissistic societies. We no longer enjoy a flourishing natural home, but face depleted, stressed, and often collapsing ecosystems.

Nikiforuk doesn't turn to simplistic solutions such as merely shifting to alternative renewable energy. Rather, he argues, this must be accompanied by radically reducing consumption and by liberation from enslavement to a materialist vision of happiness.

CPJ's policy work of the last 50 years – e.g. poverty, Aboriginal, environmental, economic, and other issues – intersects here in important ways. CPJ is fuelled by *hope* in the cosmic Christ, i.e. "for from him and through him and to him are all things" (Rom. 11:36). This gives CPJ a unique source for alternative proposals on a range of issues: signposts pointing towards the renewal of "all things."

Book Reviews



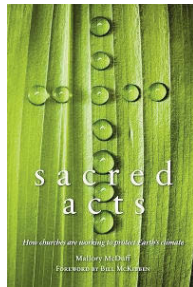
**Owning Our Future:
The Emerging
Ownership
Revolution
Economy**
By Marjorie Kelly
Berrett-Koehler
Publishers, 2012

Reviewed by Sheila McKinley, *osu*

This book is about choosing an economy that promotes and fosters life. Marjorie Kelly is a fellow at Tellus Institute, a Boston think-tank, and director of ownership strategy with Cutting Edge Capital. In language that is accessible even to those without a background in economics, she takes the reader around the globe to illustrate the differences between extractive and generative economies.

This book is particularly relevant as we move into an era of ecological limits and numerous financial collapses. The first section of the book illustrates the pitfalls of extractive ownership – focused on generating wealth in the short term – by investigating the steps that led to a couple losing their home to foreclosure. The story of this couple is being repeated endlessly and painfully due to an economy based on maximizing profits and minimizing risk, often at the expense of employees, consumers, and the environment.

The second and third sections of the book focus on alternative approaches based on sustainability, community, and sufficiency. What is truly heartening is to visit living examples of generative economies already in place. From the lobster industry in Maine, to community forests in Mexico and a major department store in Great Britain, Kelly presents a variety of approaches based on generative principles. Even as Kelly points out the challenges with these new companies, she offers some practical suggestions to help businesses develop approaches which will benefit the environment, the company, and the consumers over the long term.



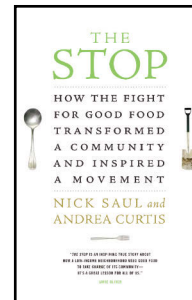
**Sacred Acts:
How Churches are
Working to Protect
Earth's Climate**
By Mallory McDuff
New Society
Publishers, 2012

Reviewed by Joe Gunn

You are concerned about the environment. You and your family recycle faithfully, and attempt to live without extravagance. You appreciate that your faith community has spoken of the need for care of God's creation – but you aren't aware that churches are actually *doing* anything to address the depth of ecological challenges of the 21st century.

Sacred Acts provides real stories of real activities by 13 authors from a wide range of Christian backgrounds. An Evangelical pastor embarked on a Creation Care Prayer Walk to draw attention to what our fossil fuel addiction does to the poor. Episcopalians trained unemployed Latinos and Blacks to carry out retrofits of worship centres and low-income homes. Monks who believe that burying the dead is a work of mercy teamed up with conservation societies to undertake “natural burials” to defend lands against development. Church leaders lobbied legislators to remind them that “burning coal goes against religious values.”

Author McDuff sees four avenues for climate action: stewardship, spirituality, advocacy, and justice, and divides her book accordingly. She believes that all voices and all sacred acts are needed to care for creation, and refuses to caricature certain religious beliefs or responses, knowing that “we need the power of religion to bring a values-based message to the reality of climate change.” Read this book, and be inspired to join in sacred acts of your own.



**The Stop: How the
Fight for Good Food
Transformed a
Community and
Inspired a
Movement**
By Nick Saul and
Andrea Curtis
Random House
Canada, 2013

Reviewed by Brad Wassink

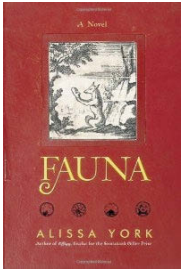
In their book *The Stop*, Nick Saul and Andrea Curtis present a controversial yet increasingly popular view that food banks are not the solution to hunger. That food is more than a commodity. That rotten, processed, and generally unhealthy food is not good enough for low-income Canadians. And that we can do better.

Written from Nick's perspective, *The Stop* brings us through his 14-year journey as executive director of The Stop Community Food Centre in Toronto. We follow Nick as he goes from knowing next to nothing about food to being at the centre of an innovative food movement. He makes the issues accessible by starting with the basics of hunger in Canada and slowly digging deeper and deeper. *The Stop* presents new and challenging issues for food banks such as how to incorporate healthy choices, dignity, and community into a broken system.

Along the way, Nick is quick to admit his own faults, mistakes, and ignorance. His humility is a refreshing change of pace from the usual elitism of the food justice movement. At times, *The Stop* reads like a novel, with vivid stories from Nick's own community. He often goes on tangents, only to return to the story he started ten pages before; not unlike a day in the life at The Stop.

But *The Stop* also focuses on the bigger picture, ending on a note of hope and optimism. We need people like Nick and Andrea within the food bank system. And if we, like them, don't give up, we will one day see the change we seek.

Book Reviews



Fauna
By Alissa York
Random House
Canada, 2010

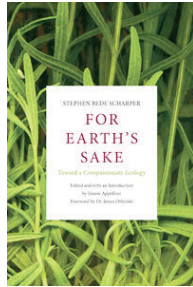
Reviewed by Sarah Shepherd

“It’s weird how life steers you.” Alissa York’s third novel, *Fauna*, is an eloquent testimony to how lifegiving community might begin with an initial chance encounter but is sustained with passion, vulnerability, and perseverance.

The book rotates through the stories of five characters who come together not in a café or a church, but a gritty wrecking yard in Toronto’s Don Valley, an unexpected haven of welcome and safety for all. We see them all struggle with their own demons: living without a home, coping with post-war stress and work-related breakdown, recovering from abuse or the death of a loved one. And each shows strength, resilience, and most of all an evolving respect and compassion not only for each other but for all other forms of life. The sixth character is the counterpoint: filled with anger and hatred that doesn’t bar the reader from developing sympathy for him as his story of childhood abuse and abandonment unfolds.

Fauna does a brilliant job of portraying how fully present the “wild” is in this urban landscape we connect with glass towers and condos. Voices of raccoons and skunks are occasionally interspersed with others. Each person is intimately interconnected with wild and domestic animals and birds: one does pet rehabilitation, one is a government inspections agent monitoring animal smuggling, some offer care and dignity for injured and killed wildlife, one lives with her dog in a tent in a ravine.

The resilient love of life, with raw honesty instead of cloying sweetness, leaves the reader with hope for a world that can indeed be one of dignity for all.



**For Earth’s Sake:
Toward a
Compassionate
Ecology**
By Stephen Bede
Scharper
Novalis Publishing
Inc., 2013

Reviewed by Karri Munn-Venn

What on Earth are we doing here? This question is at the core of Scharper’s reflection and analysis. *For Earth’s Sake* is a collection of readings – previously published separately – arranged along three themes: revealing, reflecting, and redeeming. Addressing everything from green weddings and burials to the ethics of organic farming and the contribution of Gaia theory, ecofeminism, and liberation theology to current social and ecological analysis, Scharper challenges mainstream thinking and status quo lifestyles. He guides the reader towards what he refers to as an “anthropo-harmonic view,” that is, a perspective where we as humans participate not as masters or stewards of the earth, but as plain members of the biotic and cosmic community.

Combining short articles (including “The Ethics of Organic Farming”), and longer, more in-depth reflections (such as “Option for the Poor and Option for the Earth: Toward a Sustainable Solidarity”), Scharper explores the intertwined issues of ecological destruction and global inequality using language that is both accessible and convincing. Each section also includes “questions to ponder and exercises to consider,” encouraging the reader to take a personal journey deeper into the issues explored.

In conversation with Simon Appolloni, Scharper concludes by offering “a vision and a process for reimagining a new way of being human” that begins with awe and reverence for the natural world. He calls on us, as humans, to acknowledge our vulnerability to the climate crisis and, through acts of love, to seek social justice in a way that respects and dignifies non-human nature.

Coming in September from
Citizens for Public Justice

Living Ecological Justice: A Biblical Response to the Environmental Crisis

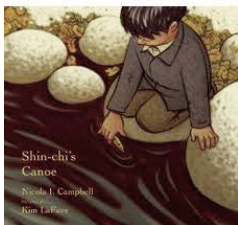
Looking for an inspiring, relevant,
and practical resource on
ecological justice issues?

Living Ecological Justice follows on the successful *Living Justice: A Gospel Response to Poverty*, which was praised for being both inspiring and usable. The book is organized into three parts: protecting what we love; the biblical case for creation advocacy; and towards abundant life for all creation – worship and action. Issues are explored through scripture with reflections, activities, and prayers by Canadian Christians from a wide range of backgrounds.

We’re asking challenging questions: How do we become closer to Christ through a deepening relationship with creation? How do we move from the idea of human dominion of the earth to one of creation justice? What does it mean, from an Indigenous and biblical perspective, for God to have a covenant with all of creation? How can ecological justice become part of our worship services? And, what will it take for Canadian churches to step up their advocacy efforts in the face of climate change? Other topics include lessons from nature, the centrality of food, and the importance of global solidarity.

An excellent resource for individuals, small groups, and congregations. Learn more and order your advance copy at www.cpj.ca/lej.

Book Reviews for children of all ages



Shin-chi's Canoe
By Nicola I. Campbell
Groundwood Books/House of Anansi, 2008
Recommended for all ages

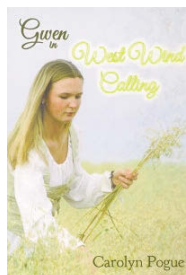
“Why isn’t this taught in schools?” Nicola Campbell’s *Shin-chi’s Canoe* answers a question Indian Residential School survivors have asked for years. It is a well-researched, elementary-age resource on the 150,000 Aboriginal children taken to government-initiated,

church-run, residential schools between 1850 and 1996.

Shin-chi, an Interior Salish boy, and his older sister Shi-shi-etko are loaded onto a cattle truck to school. Faced with inadequate food and harsh conditions, and forbidden to speak their language or practice their culture, the children demonstrate the resistance that former students have described – making friends, stealing food, speaking their language in secret, inventing hand signs, and protecting younger children. The book does not, however, address physical and sexual abuse, or the death of children at residential schools.

Illustrator Kim LaFave’s use of shadow and muted tones powerfully conveys sorrow, longing, and connection to place. The sophisticated free verse text can be read aloud to 4–7-year-olds, independently by older children, and Campbell’s preface provides historical context for adult and teen readers. But the book is most effective in a single-grade or multi-aged group setting. *Shin-chi’s Canoe* describes residential schools from the perspective of First Nations children; it is a beautiful book that belongs in every Canadian school.

Reviewed by **Laurel Dykstra**



Gwen in West Wind Calling
By Carolyn Pogue
Sumach Press, 2012
Recommended for ages 10+

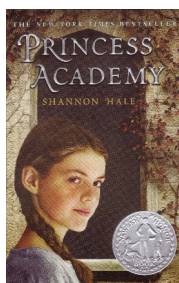
For those who enjoy historical exploits of feisty young women, rejoice! *West Wind Calling*, by Carolyn Pogue, has all the key elements: a spirited young heroine, a

historical setting, and an eventual triumph over adversaries who eventually see the error of their ways. In this sequel to *Gwen*, Home Girl Gwen Peters is back again, moving from Brantford, Ontario, to Calgary in the (then) Northwest Territories. In her new home, she meets all sorts of people – wonderful new friends as well as people prepared to do anything to make a buck.

I love these sorts of stories but the pacing of this one was very fast, to the point where the story felt like scenes were coming together too quickly. I was also uncomfort-

able with the treatment of racism, which was all-pervasive in 1898 Canadian society. In this story, racists were cruel until they were nice, and then all prejudice seemed to disappear. I think that the readers would have benefitted more from an honest depiction. And so, overall, I had mixed feelings about *West Wind Calling*. But for those who like historical fiction, complete with a spunky heroine, this book is for you.

Reviewed by **Charlotte Scott-Frater**

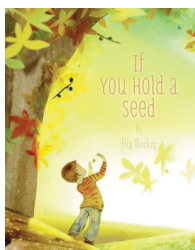


Princess Academy
By Shannon Hale
Bloomsbury USA, 2005
Recommended for ages 8+

In this fantasy novel Miri is one of twenty girls chosen to compete at the “Princess Academy” to become the wife of Prince Stefan, heir to the throne of Danland. At first, Miri doesn’t want to be there, but gradually she comes to appreciate all the things that she is learning. But when bandits attack the Academy, the girls realize that they will have to cooperate in ways they didn’t think possible.

I liked this book because Miri has a strong sense of justice and helps the other girls with their questions, even the girls she doesn’t particularly like. The book also talks about love and doing what you think is right.

Reviewed by **Zoe Wind (age 10)**



If You Hold a Seed
By Elly MacKay
Running Press Kids, 2013
Recommended for all ages

With its simple, flowing text and gently textured illustrations, Elly MacKay’s debut book will appeal to readers of all ages. *If You Hold a Seed* tells a beautiful

story about the power of a seed – and the power of a dream.

“I rate this book four and three-quarters out of five,” said Gabriel, age nine. “I like the artist,” added Oscar, age seven. “It looks like they’re swimming in air. It just feels like it is magical.” Even little sister Naomi, not quite two, was captivated by the soft, warm pictures.

While the greatest strength of MacKay’s work is certainly her art, the boys agree

that her core message also comes through clearly: “If we plant a seed and make a wish, our wish will come true.”

Oh, and one more thing. Oscar is certain that “this is a good little kids’ book for information, because the pictures teach about the seasons.”

Reviewed by **the Munn-Venn family**

“Restorers of streets with dwellings...”

By Henriette Thompson



St. Matthew's in Winnipeg being transformed into affordable housing

Home, shelter, hospitality, neighbourliness – these words are replete with ancient meaning for Christians and people of faith.

Perhaps that is why the levels of poverty, homelessness, and related illness in Canada seem so discordant. How can it be that Canada's total national wealth continues to grow but governments in Canada claim they can't afford to meet basic needs – food, shelter, health, and education among them?

The human face of precarious housing emerges as we note that approximately 300,000–400,000 people are moving in and out of homelessness and 1.5 million households lack secure housing.

Moreover, homelessness alone costs the Canadian economy \$4.5 billion annually through emergency shelters, hospital visits, policing, lost productivity, and more. “It costs less to end homelessness than to manage it,” reads the Web banner of the Calgary Homeless Foundation.

Political leadership plays a key role in making sure all are housed. Lutherans and Anglicans joined many others in the Dignity for All campaign in early 2013, co-led by Citizens for Public Justice, to mobilize support for Bill C-400, a private member's bill, to address the crisis of homelessness and inadequate housing.

Support for the campaign came from across the country, including from new places that made the campaign a success even though the Bill ultimately didn't pass. The national Anglican church reached out

directly to people who had been involved in previous calls for adequate housing, as well as promoting the campaign online and in social media. One notable example of local action was Bill Mous, Coordinator of Social Justice for the Anglican Diocese of Niagara, who did a thorough analysis of where each MP in the diocese stood on the issue, and informed each congregation of

what their MP was doing with encouragement to contact him or her directly.

National leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) have taken a stand by identifying homelessness and affordable housing as a 2013–16 social justice priority for the two churches under the theme, “Together, for the love of the world.” The 800 delegates at July's Joint Assembly in Ottawa heard from church leaders that the two churches need to work together and with a wider movement to appropriately house all Canadians. Members were called to respond through learning, advocacy, prayer, and mobilizing within their own communities and with valued ecumenical partners like Citizens for Public Justice.

At a local level, some congregations seem out of touch with the reality of poverty, homelessness, or precarious housing. Others, by joining broad-based coalitions, contribute meaningfully by advocating for change, working together to address local needs, and participating in private/public/non-profit housing ventures. Lutherans and Anglicans are imagining and implementing new ways of transforming properties and buildings according to community-shaped visions:

- “Divine Development,” an initiative of St. John the Divine Anglican Church in Victoria, plans to incorporate an affordable housing component with a social service hub space, a non-profit office space, a church, and an outdoor space.

- Lutheran Urban Mission Society offers pastoral care, hospitality, and street-level outreach to those who are homeless in Vancouver's downtown east side.
- KAIROS Calgary and the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) support families at risk of or experiencing homelessness at Acadia Place, a 58-unit apartment complex.
- St. Matthew's in Winnipeg is converting its property to 25 units of affordable housing, a neighbourhood resource centre, and a dedicated worship space.
- From June 17 to 21, Anglicans in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation, Ontario, participate in a five-day community open house to 25 visitors from the south: an opportunity to learn about the need for housing among many other issues.

Churches as (re)sources of spiritual community can articulate biblical wisdom that will resist privatizing justice and construing homelessness and precarious housing as personal failures. “Homelessness is not the result of individual pathology,” says Michael Shapcott, Director of Housing and Innovation at the Wellesley Institute in Toronto.

How can communities of faith hold on to a biblical vision for home, hospitality, and neighbourliness? How can we be “repairers of broken walls and restorers of streets with dwellings” (Isaiah 58:12)? It cannot be about us. “To share bread with the hungry (or housing with the homeless) is to love one's neighbour, but to share moral agency is to love one's neighbour *as oneself*,” writes Garret Keizer. It is to ‘give help’ in the fullest sense – that is, to place the privilege of helping in another person's possession.”

Henriette Thompson is the Anglican Church of Canada's Public Witness Coordinator for Social Justice. She is also a former board member of CPJ.



Moving from Memory to Healing and Joy

By Lorraine Land



Photo: United Church of Canada Archives 90.162P/1145N

Remember. Reconcile. Rejoice. And then do it all over again. And again. And again.

The theme *Remember, Reconcile, and Rejoice* was used last year by survivors of Mount Elgin Indian Residential School. They assembled to erect a monument honouring children who attended (and many who died at) the school between 1850 and 1947 – recent evidence shows the number of deaths was much higher than previously estimated. The survivors of this and other Indian Residential Schools came together to honour a terrible past, but nevertheless their gathering was imbued with a deep sense of liberation and joy and a striking gentleness of spirit amidst the tears.

The children who attended Mount Elgin between 1850 and 1947 left an amazing historical record of penciled scribbles and carvings etched high in the hayloft of a large horse barn, documenting loneliness, abuse, hard work, and often a desperate desire to escape life. It is only by squarely facing the deep pain caught in those etchings and in the stories of survivors that those survivors and their children and grandchildren are moving towards healing (“reconcile”) and even celebration together (“rejoice”).

There is a deep sense that this movement from remembering the pain to living the healing is not a straight line – it is a circle that rotates over and over again. History does not repeat itself – it echoes, and each generation must find the meaning of the echoes and weave stories of pain and healing into their own

narratives of seeking and finding wholeness.

Remember, Reconcile, and Rejoice encapsulates the healing journey we face individually and collectively, and echoes in my consciousness as I think about CPJ’s journey.

Many of the issues CPJ faces today echo similar concerns in the Canadian landscape at the time of CPJ’s inception (as the Christian Action Foundation in Alberta and the Committee for Justice and Liberty in Ontario) in 1963. In 2013, as in 1963, we collectively face the pressing need to develop government policy focused on all aspects of building healthy community, not just on economic growth. We encounter similar echoes of questions about our national identity – do we see ourselves as an inclusive community (that protects and shelters the “widow and orphan” and harbours the refugee) or an exclusive one dedicated to preserving what is “ours”?

But there are also ways in which we find ourselves in a very different political environment today. After fifty years of public policy development where the government relied on multiple sources of expertise, CPJ and other faith and social organizations are not only ignored but penalized by government if they express views publicly on issues such as poverty, human rights, or environmental justice. Social media is creating new ways of tracking and responding to events, triggering global citizens’ movements such as the Arab Spring, Occupy, and

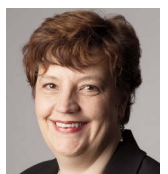
Idle No More. News cycles and public attention are ever quicker, flashing by with less and less traction in the public consciousness.

These new realities are not entirely new paths, however. They, too, echo, what has gone before. The root principles that motivated CPJ in 1963 remain relevant. In the midst of information overload, we genuinely need (and many seek) sources of public policy analysis that are non-partisan, non-polemical, and based on a profound conviction that love for our neighbour is a vital political calling and not a tired cliché. The needs of our neighbours are, if anything, more profound and desperate. The tasks before us – such as addressing child poverty, seeking a just relationship between Canada’s Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, and cultivating an ethos of environmental respect – are daunting but hope-filled missions for God’s people seeking to live justly with one another and the earth.

As for myself, I remained convinced that God calls us to a just reality whose existence is spoken of by past and modern prophets. The psalmist in Psalm 27 reminds us that we “shall yet see the goodness of God in the land of the living.” This hope-filled conviction was echoed in the 1960s, at the time of CPJ’s inception, by then-prophet Martin Luther King who reminded us that “the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.”

And I look to the modern prophets at CPJ who continue to remind us to seek the common good of all, out of that conviction that God’s love “will out” even in the midst of turbulent political times, as we all *Remember, Reconcile, and Rejoice...*

Lorraine Land lives in Lakefield, Ontario, and is former CPJ staff and a partner at Olthuis Kleer Townshend, where she practices Aboriginal and environmental law.



Loyalty to “The Stranger”: Two Voices

In the spring edition of the Catalyst, we wrote about the impact of the federal government’s cuts to refugee health care made in June 2012. Here we share the story of one woman who was deeply affected, and a biblical reflection on how God calls us to solidarity with refugees.

Our children’s lives are at risk: Gabriela’s story

By Carolina Teves

“If you have children, it’s harder to face a situation of emergency knowing that you do not have access to medical assistance. I’d rather see myself sick than my kids.”

This voice represents hundreds of individuals affected by the limitations of the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) implemented in June 2012.

“Gabriela” (not her real name) lived in constant fear of her husband and his family. After years of struggle she borrowed enough money to go to Canada with her two children and seek asylum.

Along with the many barriers newcomers encounter, the young mother was faced with even greater ones when her case was initially declared abandoned. Toronto’s FCJ Refugee Centre supported her and her case was re-opened, but the decision was negative. She now awaits a decision that will examine new evidence.

Gabriela’s life continued as she waited. One morning her three-year-old son developed a fever: particularly worrying because of his previous surgery. Even more disturbing was the refusal of the closest walk-in clinic to see her son, saying he was no longer covered by medical care. Frantic, they went to their family doctor and were turned away again. She was then informed that the Interim Federal Health Program no longer covered her because she had become a rejected refugee claimant and her country is on the government’s list of “safe” countries. She was referred to the hospital emergency room and had to pay for treatment.

Gabriela did not understand. “I was desperate, confused, and lost.” Between working and caring for her children she hadn’t known about the new refugee health cuts. “I didn’t know that my country is considered a ‘safe country’ and that because of this I don’t have right to health insurance.”

“Our children’s lives are at risk, if I do not pay they won’t see my children. What will happen if my son needs more medication? Is the right to health care a privilege now?”

The “savings” created by the cutting of the IFHP amount to 59 cents per Canadian. Is this worth what Gabriela, and so many others like her, are going through?



Carolina Teves is the Communications Coordinator at FCJ Refugee Centre in Toronto.



Refugees in scripture – a welcome even more radical than you think.

By Mark Glanville

The best known biblical text calling God’s people to welcome the stranger is found in Deuteronomy 10:18–19:

*He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and **loves** the stranger, giving him food and clothing. **Love** the*

stranger, therefore, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Refugee activists (rightly) use these verses to call church and society to practices of welcome and hospitality for refugees. However, few people realize just how forceful the call to justice is in this passage. The power of these verses becomes evident when we see that they are preceded by (and parallel to) another verse:

*Yet the LORD set his heart in **love** on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. (Deuteronomy 10:16)*

The key word here is **love**, which is repeated three times in these verses. The LORD not only **loves** his people Israel (10:15), but is equally committed to the stranger: what a remarkable statement!

The Hebrew word for love used here (*ahav*) refers particularly to God’s covenant love that is expressed in action. God’s actioned covenant love for his people is pre-eminently expressed in the Exodus event, when God rescues Israel from slavery in Egypt. Use of *ahav* for God’s commitment to the stranger here can only mean that God has a fierce loyalty to the stranger. God is on the stranger’s side—he “has the stranger’s back.”

This raises a serious question: in light of God’s covenant commitment to the stranger, will the church (and society) join God’s side, and make a covenant commitment to refugees? For this is the third use of “love” in this text: Israel is commanded to “love the stranger,” and through Christ, the church and society today are called to make this covenant commitment to refugees.



Mark Glanville is pastor of Willoughby Christian Reformed Church, B.C., and is writing a Ph.D. on Old Testament Ethics. Mark blogs at markrglanville.wordpress.com.

Falling in Love with the Earth

By Stephen Bede Scharper



Photo: Ohio Sea Grant and Stone Laboratory
www.flickr.com/ohioseagrant

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

Genesis 1:26–28

About a dozen years ago, I was invited by a venerable Canadian theological school to teach a course on stewardship.

On the first day of class, I explained what I meant by stewardship, specifically biblical and theological approaches to creation in light of our present ecological challenges. One of the students politely excused himself: he thought the course would deal with fundraising for congregations.

I could not blame him for the misunderstanding. This was the first time in the college's 100-year history that the

"stewardship course" dealt not with congregational finance, but with the fate of the Earth itself.

Theological curricula and environmental currents have moved swiftly since then. Global awareness of climate change has increased significantly, as have its dramatic effects, including whipsaw-like weather swings, increased desertification and species extinction, global warming, rising sea levels, and the emergence of what some term "climate chaos."

Theologically, the stewardship model has deepened to embrace the notion of "creation care." Rather than seeing ourselves as domineering but benevolent "land managers" of a planet that has been entrusted to us (as the steward model has suggested to some), there is a growing sense that we as humans are not managers but co-inhabitants of the larger life community.

As such, we are called to a deeper "ecological conscience," where our sense of community is expanded beyond the human family to embrace the community of life itself. Realizing our deep interconnection with all of creation, we are sensing that we are both potent shapers of the unfolding of creation and yet at the same time entirely dependent upon creation for our very survival.

Creation care thus helps people of faith to move away from the suggestion that humans are lords, masters, and conquerors of nature. Some have interpreted Genesis 1:26–28 in such a manner, citing the divine injunction to "fill the earth" and "subdue" it and have "dominion" over the creatures of the Earth. The human-centred hubris of this "anthropocentric" approach was given a great boost by the birth of modernity, with its emphasis on scientific prowess and technological control of nature.

Creation care helps move us from an anthropocentric vantage to an "anthropo-harmonic" perspective. This perspective

suggests that the human strives not for domination of, but for harmony with, the rest of the created world, and that we as humans are participants rather than "masters and commanders" within the fabric of creation. This perspective also suggests that we can only be fully human, and fully true to our Christian calling, when the individual and communal elements of our social concerns are integrated to sustain all of creation. Thus, social justice, ecological integrity, and the awe, joy, and wonder of the universe itself are all woven into a seamless garment of our faith journey.

Our Aboriginal brothers and sisters have been particularly helpful in calling us to this sense of deep integration of our ethical and ecological lives. Creation care involves not only a "deep ecology" which accents our profound interconnection with all of creation, but also a "social ecology" rooted in life-affirming cultural patterns and social justice. We are realizing that the so-called ecological crisis runs along the same fault lines of social, cultural, economic, political, racial, and gendered oppression.

Along with St. Francis of Assisi, then, we are invited not to a mere fine-tuning of our ethical and theological reflection. Rather, we are being invited to relationship — a relationship with all of creation that involves affection, compassion, celebration, and joy.

We are invited to fall in love with the Earth.

*This is an excerpt from
Living Ecological Justice,
to be released in September.
See page 7 for more information.*

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